9/11/68

Dear Mr. Silber,

It is necessary to respond to your letter of 9/9 with candor. I do, with the reservation that what I say is in confidence. When the time for making it public arrives, I will do so as I believe I should, if I do.

The record of the Guardian on the Kennedy assassination is at best deplorable. In its own way it is as corrupt as that of the commercial press. I am not saying this was purposeful, but does the reason matter, particularly with such a paper. I spoke to the Guardian in person, to Russ Nixon and another, before there was any book on the assassination. Contrary to what he would like believed and what he pretends, Mark's was neither the first nor close to it. I wrote the Guardian, explaining that I was without funds, had finally, after going through more than a hundred publishers, gone into debt to bring out a private printing. I had earlier turned out a limited edition when there was indication of plagiarism in France and a clear inference that the French committee had intervened to block publication. through Sartre, incredible as it may seem. He never answered and of my letters, nor did Gallimard, the publisher (and his). The whole thing was so hairy that the French Embassy, on the q.t. - and their volition - supplied me with free counsel. Their lawyer said that what had happened was very represehensible but not actionable under French law. Perhaps this makes little sense to you, but it seems like it is the first of Mark's underhand things to preserve the field for himself. There were other things in France, like the publisher who must by then have already contracted his book cabling me for an exclusive option (granted) a month before he had his press party to announce appearance of Mark's under his impribt. There was hardly time for the translation, etc., following his request for an option on mine. I never heard another word.

Since then Mark has been stealing like mad. Quite literally, and not alone from me. This does not make him as unique as one might hope, but then, he makes pretenses others eschew.

As you know, Mark did get his "brief" published in the Guardian. He makes quite a thing about this in "A Citizen's Dissent". But in "Rush To Judgement", where itwas most appropriate, and where one of the sales points was the thousands of footnotes, there is no footnote to the Guardian. Sally Belfrage arranged for his publication in England. She so told me herself. Find this in the second book, or the first, or in any credit- anywhere. Mark cannot acknowledge these things and maintain the pose of being the guy who did everything and by the great depth of his good will tolerates all the late-coming interlopers.

The truth, as only an intimate knowledge of the field can show, is that he hasbrought less to light than almost anyone. His is remarkably inaccurate writing. The best that can be said for it is that he acts like a police-court lawyer. The difference is that in a book there is no adversary on the other side.

Impossible as it may seem, he defames commercial publishers and libels the media. While it without doubt is true that they are sycophants, crooked, etc., he suffered not at all from the press, which gave him enormous attention, and the publishers did not do anything like what he represents. His account of the Crove affair is fiction, knowingly false. He never performed on his contract. Viking, rather than as he says, gave him a long critique of his ms, with what are described

tox me as constructive suggestions - 14 single-spaced pages. McGraw-Hill's editor, unsolicitedly, told me he considered the ms unpublishable. Rather than the representation he gives of Norton, I refused to do what Norton asked because it went too far the other wayx - the way Mark says they are afraid to go. They, in effect, asked me to charge the government with conspiracy. In short, the entire underpinning of what could have been an important and much-needed commentary on how the press failed our society when its freedom and careful attention was required emerges in a work that is so dishonest it will, unless corrected, be an historical defense of the corrupt press. The same is true of radio and TV. Mark personalizes the whole things, to make it seem that he alone (which is what all the ads say) did everything, and the campaign was against him alone. He had nothing to dox with the Metromedia "Minority Report", except to walk in on someone else scape. His complaint against WOR is scrupulously dishonest. Radio people, regardless of their beliefs, get to spot and hate a phoney. Mark has a way of coming through this way to the shrewder. The truth is not what he says, because they gave a single show 16 hours of prime, non-commercial time. I know because it was my show. I eviscerated Louis Nizer and so bashed ~~Thxkxxx~~ Charles Roberts he never again risked a confrontation. Then I had so slaughtered the Commission's defenders, on the taping WOR doubled the agreed-to two hours and then, after advertising (expensively) repeated the same four hours three times.

I can file a plagiarism suit on both books any time I want. It is not even skilful thievery. More, I have him on tape saying it is perfectly all right to steal and use another's literary property.

The Guardian never responded to my initial request for help, never responde to my request that they advertise the book and keep the bookstore's profit on sales, etc. They never reviewdd my first book until Sally sent her father a copy and he did one, months later. Instead of reviewing any on my other books, the only ones, except to a degree, for Sylvia Meagher's, to bring any new fact to light, particulalrly the one I did on New Orleans, with a remarkably fine foreword by Garrison, you waited until months later and then did an interview with Mark than makes ~~it~~ it seem that all the stuff was his. Then a review of "A Citizne's Dissent" that complains the writers have not put the subject in a proper context! Guardian readers are unaware of this only because of the Guardian's partiality and abdications. The subtitle of my second book is "The FBI-Secret Service Coverup". That of the third book, "Case for Conspiracy with the CIA", says and proves what was being covered up.

Garrison's stuff on this comes from me and my writing, as I will, if there is ever any useful purpose to be served, tell you in detail, beginning with his NBC stuff a year ago June. It is from my unpubaished "Tiger To Ride", which I outlined to him because he could not put his own case in perspective. I was the first writer to appear before the Grand Jury (4/28/67). I delayed this appearance that I might get my own 200,000 ms in the mail before ever meeting him, thus preserving his integrity and mine. His more recent speeches come from the introduction to my fourth book, "Photographic Whitewash", particularly the one in Los Angeles in November 1967. He was decent enough to invite me to hear it as his guest (I was working in SF) as his way of acknowledging. These, quite obviously, are things I cannot and will not say in public, but they are the realities of work x in this rare field where so much is characterized by the most proficient incompetence, so much of the real work done by the unknowns. None, incidently, are mentioned by Mark, who says a few nice things about those who are not his competitors.

I have just returned from Washington and went to get this off before I return to work, so it is perhaps less comprehensible that I hope. I try and tell you what you have done in adopting Mark at his own terms, as the only one when he is, in fact, the greatest vulnerability to our side. If you recall the apologetic writings, you will recall that they all focus on him. Not one, for example,

AP, CBS, Sparrow, Walz, Roberts, etc., even allege against my work what they say about his and Epstein's. The reason is dual: doctrinal difference and factual accuracy. At some point the powerful forces will be able to force an accounting, and when they do, oh, boy, what they can do to us - through Mark! Those who read his books, who get their beliefs from him, have no inkling of this. As I said, the most intimate knowledge of the field is required. Very few have it.

This is part of what bugged me in my letter to Steiner. I think that while he and the Guardian had every reason to trust Mark, that does not excuse the characters of the reviews and interviews and the editorial decisions, which have the dishonest effect of making your readers believe that the one prominent name that really brought nothing essential to light and has done absolutely nothing on the case since is the whole crusade, that reading (and need I say buying?) his work puts them home.

Also, I think you should know how I feel before we consider any business relationship. I think the Guardian has abused me and in so doing has abused the trust of its readers and its stated principles. I think the Guardian has demonstrated a bias and partisanship that make me wonder. You have already taken a very firm position. I cannot but wonder what you would do with work requiring advertising and promotion not by the gal you have called "darling", one alone.

I hardly know what to say about these books I have in rough draft. (Incidently, I have never had time to publish anything but a rough draft. I am trying to make books as topical as magazine articles, and I can do a solid book faster than any major magazine can turn out an article. Not only can-have.) If you would like to read them, fine, then, perhaps, we can talk. This brings up the problem of the few copies I have, and the urgent need for keeping copies of everything out of Big Brother's reach. As of this moment, I have no copy to spare of either. They are scattered among those working in the field, by which I mean those quietly doing what Mark has failed to do, real work, so they can learn what I know, that is on paper, and a few publishers and publications. If this letter doesn't turn you off, perhaps the Guardian can give you a few days to come down here and read them and other things -I've got perhaps 3-4,000 pages of the once-secret documents that I have ransacked, not all of which are yet in manuscripts. We can supply accomodations. We are but an hour from either Baltimore or Washington and could meet you either place.

There is the additional possibility of your distributing what I have already published. We have been giving wholesalers a 50% discount. Three of the books sell for $4.95. One is still entirely fresh, though more than a year old, thanks, in part, to Guardian suppression and in part to the rather strong and successful efforts made against it. It deals with the suppressed photographic evidence and names names in attributing motive.

Because I have in the past gone to much trouble and for a man who is $35,000 in debt from the work, meaningful expense, in sending $15.00 worth of books to the Guardian special handling and special delivery, I will not give you any more free copies. You got them all and never used one. Aside from everything else, how you could have failed to use the first words Jim Garrison ever wrote on the subject, entirely escapes me. I would just feel bad if I did, and I hope you can understand this. It is not that I am short on copies, I have plenty of all the books. I just resent very much the to-me dishonesty of the Guardian on this subject, I will not use a more polite designation to curry your favor, and I will not do what I think would destroy my self respect. Besides, an after-thought: phone around to the bookstores and try and buy them and you'll see what real suppression is.

As I said above, I am more than $35,000 indebt from the work I have been doing and for which you have been so thoughtfully been giving others credit. I have had no income since the assassination. Therefore, these manuscripts must help repay their cost. Can your publishing enterprise, if it every gets going, offer me any assurances alone these lines? Without that, I just cannot deal with you on them.

If you want a dispassionate appraisal of this work, why not phone Vince Salandria, a Philadelphian I presume is known to your paper. He has hastily scanned both of them, recently. He is a lawyer and can counsel you in other ways that interest a publisher. This I suggest as an alternative to your coming here and reading them. And that, I recognize, is very unusual and most unlikely.

There remains still another possibility. There are some books I would like to do in haste and can. What I would like to do is turn out a rough draft that I would then read for accuracy and forget about it so I can go on to other work. One of these I have partly done for another purpose and you can soon read that. The other would be a book on Edward J. Epstein and his "work", particularly his current attack on Garrison. His New Yorker piece is about to come out as a liking book. If we have a chance to discuss this, I think it could in mahy ways be an auspicious first for your publishing enterprize, for with a book on exactly the opposite side you could demand equal time on every outlet that airs him. I think this book is calculated for heavy exposure. With a little help fromseveral others in the field who have had personal experiences with him I have not, I could turn out a more definitive work. Entirely alone, in less than two weeks from the beginning, if my wife-typist holds up, I can give you a documented full-length book with an exciting appendix of the suppressed New Orleans evidence that is properly part of any book appraising Garrison. We reall should talk about this. I can also show you how to have this book on sale a month from the time I start writing it. It is not at all impossible. From the day I wrote the introduction until the day I got the first 100 off the bindery, "Photographic Whitewash" was 28 days only!

What I am saying is that I think I can show you how to add a topical dimension to your projected books, how to keep their cost down, etc. I think I can show you how to reduce your investment, capital requirements, etc., and increase your profits, on topical subjects. What else does the world and the reading public require today?

I could do another very fast and fairly deffnitive book on Oswald as a government agent and what relates to it, a book that could be real exciting and entirely new in its content, a new dimension in the field, really. You can, if you desire, see the raw material, and I think you can get an idea from that. It may, historically, be the most shocking book of all if you can see it the way I do.

I think we should talk. I am too broke to go to New York, slight as the cost is, and I could not possibly carry enough with me. Also, my now-reduced working day is about 18 hours, seven days a week. There is much more work in this subject than the experienced writer can imagine. I will be in New York about 11/22. but as I look at time, that is too far in the future to have any meaning in this context. But please believe me, the two books I have in mind can be quite exciting and with the doctrine the absence of which Steiner complained about. That, in fact, has been the doctrine of all my writing.

In writing you, risking as I do your judgement that I am some kind of nut or an exotic ego, I have in mind letting you know exactly how I feel. It may turn you off! Sincerely, Harold Weisberg